



Foreword

J. Calvin Giddings introduced field-flow fractionation (FFF) in 1966, as a technique applicable to macromolecules and colloids. Since then, and particularly during the past decade, FFF with its several variants has matured to become one of the most important analytical methodologies today for the separation and characterization of macromolecules and particles. Its importance is clearly evident as a continuous increase in the number of publications. The unique advantage of FFF stems from its single-phase nature. Overall, it is a highly effective technique for the separation and characterization of a wide variety of macromolecules.

First described in 1976, flow-field-flow fractionation (FIFFF), has established itself as the most frequently used of all the FFF techniques. It is universal in nature with an extensive range of application possibilities. In FIFFF, two crossed flow streams are superimposed in the same channel, and almost any liquid solution can be used as mobile phase. Its selectivity, in terms of

differences in diffusion coefficients, is particularly high. In view of its growing importance, the *Journal of Chromatography A* is devoting this special issue to flow-field-flow fractionation, with invited review articles and research papers covering essential aspects of the topic. The ultimate objective of this special issue is to highlight the versatility of FIFFF and to attract new scientists to the field, to intensify the search for new innovations. This special issue will also be of great value to those researchers already exploiting FIFFF, opening up to them new horizons in both technology and applications.

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